

**Observations Related to Pigeon Fever and Chest Hematomas
in the Calico Complex Horses located at the Indian Lakes Road Facility**

Pigeon Fever

In January 2010, I observed clinical signs that suggested horses from the Calico Complex were recovering from pigeon fever (infection with *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*). These infections probably occurred late in 2009.

A few (5-10) abscesses were still healing in 2010 during and after the Calico gather. Overall, about 2% of the horses appeared to be affected. No further abscesses have been noted. The diagnosis was based on these clinical impressions and since almost all the abscesses were healed no laboratory confirmation of the causative bacteria has been possible.

No complications are expected although recurrence is possible depending on soil and weather conditions in the area. Pigeon fever has been reported on several occasions among domestic and wild horses in Fallon and throughout Nevada and California.

Chest Hematomas

During the last month, an observation of a condition unrelated to pigeon fever has been made in about 10 yearling colts that have chest hematomas. For visitors to the facility, these swellings could be confused with pigeon fever.

The hematomas likely resulted from bruises caused by contact with the feed bunk. Modifications to the feed bunks are being made in an attempt to prevent this from occurring in the future.

The hematomas have been drained and cultured as a precaution. The only bacterial growth obtained from these cultures to date has been *Staphylococcus aureus*. This bacteria is part of the normal skin flora and most likely an insignificant contaminant of the culture. This is not the organism that causes pigeon fever and is not a contagious condition.

No complications from the hematomas are expected, and all treated hematomas are healing.

Richard Sanford DVM

NV #565